

City of Olympia Proposition No. 1 Parks and Recreation Facilities

Official Ballot Title:



The Olympia City Council adopted Ordinance No. 6314 to increase the tax on telephone, electrical, and natural gas business, for the purpose of helping fund wildlife habitat, natural areas, open space, parks, and trails and recreation-related sidewalks. This ballot measure would allow the City of Olympia to protect and preserve wildlife habitat, natural areas, and open space; acquire, develop and maintain waterfront, neighborhood, community and special use parks and playgrounds; and construct and improve hiking, biking, and walking trails and recreation-related sidewalks by increasing the tax on telephone, electrical, and natural gas business by three percent, all subject to review and recommendation by City Council-appointed citizen advisory committees.

Should this measure be:

Approved _____ Rejected _____

Statement For:

One hundred years ago, the citizens who created Priest Point Park left a legacy for Olympia. Now, it's our turn.

What is included and how is it funded?

In the first ten years, this measure acquires nine neighborhood parks, three large community parks, eighty-seven acres of natural wildlife habitat, ten walking trails, and new sidewalks along seventeen major roads. In later years, there are funds for more parks, open space, sidewalks, and maintenance. The highest priorities were identified by citizen advisory committees, with extensive public input.

This measure is funded by a 3% tax on phone, electricity, and natural gas utilities. For typical Olympia households, this is about \$60 per year – or sixteen cents per day. A utility tax spreads the cost more fairly, places a smaller burden on fixed-income homeowners and renters, avoids park usage fees, and promotes energy conservation.

For a Livable Community

A good community is more than buildings and streets.

Rebuttal for Statement Against:

Preserving natural areas, building trails through open spaces, acquiring park sites, and building sidewalks is not “silly.” It is essential to our quality of life.

Social service leaders and small business owners are supporting this proposal because it improves our community.

A 3% surcharge on our electricity, natural gas, and telephone bills - sixteen cents a day per household - is a bargain for the legacy of natural treasures this measure secures for our future.

Vote Yes.

It's also pleasant parks, safe sidewalks, and protected natural places and wildlife habitat. With our growing city, we must preserve the most valuable lands quickly.

For Health and Safety

The healthiest activity for children (and adults) is to go out and play! Walking to a park on a sidewalk, not driving, is even better. Walking is the most popular active recreation, but busy streets are dangerous without sidewalks.

For a Legacy of Natural Treasures

Priest Point Park. Watershed Park. Percival Landing. We are thankful for these places. A century from now, Olympians will thank us: for protecting natural wildlife habitat, for creating more parks, for our legacy to them.

Please vote *yes!*

www.walkolympia.org

Voters' Pamphlet Statement prepared by: Beth Doglio, Joe Hyer and Eileen McKenzie Sullivan

Explanatory Statement:

The purpose of this ballot measure is to fund the City's 2002 adopted plans for parks and recreation, by providing revenue to purchase, improve, operate and/or maintain parks, open space, wildlife habitat; natural areas and open space; waterfront, neighborhood, community and special use parks and playgrounds; hiking, biking and walking trails and recreation-related sidewalks. These additional parks and recreation facilities will provide for anticipated growth in Olympia's population and increased use of existing parks and recreation facilities. Because the Olympia City Council's adopted strategy places park land acquisition as a priority ahead of investments in park development, revenue from this measure would fund acquisition of approximately 500 acres of land, and development and maintenance of six park sites in the next 20 years. It would also fund construction of an estimated 70,000 feet of sidewalk on major streets, with an emphasis on those streets which connect neighborhoods to parks, recreational facilities and trails.

The effect of the ballot measure would be to raise the utility tax rate from 6% to 9% on privately-provided utilities, including telephone, electricity, and natural gas. This is a 3% increase that would raise approximately \$2.25 million in revenue per year. If a customer's monthly bills for telephone, electricity and natural gas services total \$165, \$9.90 in private utility tax is assessed per month. If this measure passes, the assessment would increase by \$4.95 to a new total of \$14.85 per month. The total amount of the increase in this example would be \$59.40 per year. This ballot measure would not tax utilities provided by the City of Olympia, such as water, sewer, storm water, and solid waste removal. The ballot measure also would not tax cable television services, which are regulated by federal law.

Explanatory Statement prepared by: Bob C. Sterbank, Olympia City Attorney

Statement Against:

City's sidewalk plan—just silly, *vote no*.

The City of Olympia's plan to increase utility taxes by 50 percent will fall on those who can least afford it. Utility taxes will harm the many nonprofit organizations that call Olympia home. Hardest hit will be the shelters, the food banks, and those social service agencies that are barely scraping by today.

In addition, all of the small businesses in downtown Olympia will be hit the hardest. While residents pay just a small amount of utility taxes, small businesses, such as restaurants that use large

amounts of water, natural gas and electricity, will be hard hit. The 50 percent increase in taxes may be enough to send some of them over the edge into bankruptcy.

And, all this so the city can build more sidewalks. Many neighborhoods have survived just fine, for decades without sidewalks, so what, all of a sudden, is the urgent need. We have more pressing and significant needs in Olympia. Isn't it time to say *enough* -- save tax increases for the more important needs of our city. Building more sidewalks seems a silly waste of the city's taxing authority.

Voters' Pamphlet Statement prepared by: Alan R McWain

Rebuttal for Statement For:

Olympia's official website boasts over 700 acres of parkland, listing 22 parks, not including state and county parks such as Heritage, Sylvester or Burfoot Park.

The additional 3% tax on telephone, electricity and natural gas, costs my typical business an additional \$800.00 per year or \$2.20 per day. This unfairly places the largest burden on businesses, that don't use parks, by having to pay fourteen times that of a typical homeowner, who does.